

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Procedures for Commission Review of State Opt-Out Requests from the FirstNet Radio Access Network*, Order, PS Docket No. 16-269

It is appropriate that this Order is adopted this week—the anniversary of one of our darkest days. The events of September 11 sixteen years ago left an indelible mark on this country. In my family that mark is personal—because we lost a relative in the Twin Towers.

Compounding the tragedy of that day was a lack of interoperable communications among our first responders. The absence of compatible radio systems meant that too many of the brave public safety officials who sought to respond to the emergency as it unfolded were unable to do their job because they could not communicate with one another. Too many lost their lives as a result.

Thankfully, Congress sought to do something about it. More than five years ago in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act Congress built a framework for interoperable public safety communications by putting first responders on the same airwaves nationwide. This effort, known as the First Responder Network Authority—or FirstNet—is at long last poised for deployment. It is incumbent on this Commission to support this effort to ensure broader public safety communications interoperability—something that the weather events of the last few weeks demonstrate cannot come a moment too soon.

For this reason, I support today’s decision, which clarifies for those who exercise their right to opt-out of this system the standard that the Commission will employ to ensure that a state or territory’s radio access network is fully interoperable.

This Order represents my first recorded vote as a returning Commissioner and reflects my deeply rooted belief that the first duty of the public servant is the public safety.